

Adult Social Care Complaints Report

Annual Report 24/25

Contents

Introduction	3
Complaints Received	3
LGO Cases	4
Complaint Themes	5
Timeliness of Response	7
Outcomes of the complaints	8
Making Improvements	9
People who use our complaints process.....	9
Compliments	10

Introduction

The Local Authority Social Service and National health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 set out the way in which Barking and Dagenham Council must deal with complaints about its provided Adult Social Care Services.

Under these regulations, Barking and Dagenham Council is required to produce an annual report which examines how it has dealt with its adult social care complaints, to include the numbers received, highlighted issues, number of upheld, and any actions taken because of the complaints received.

The following document is the annual report for Barking and Dagenham Adult Social Care complaints and compliments covering the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025.

Barking and Dagenham adult social care use a one stage complaints procedure to ensure that complaints are handled effectively. If a complainant is dissatisfied with the response to their complaint, they have a right of appeal to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

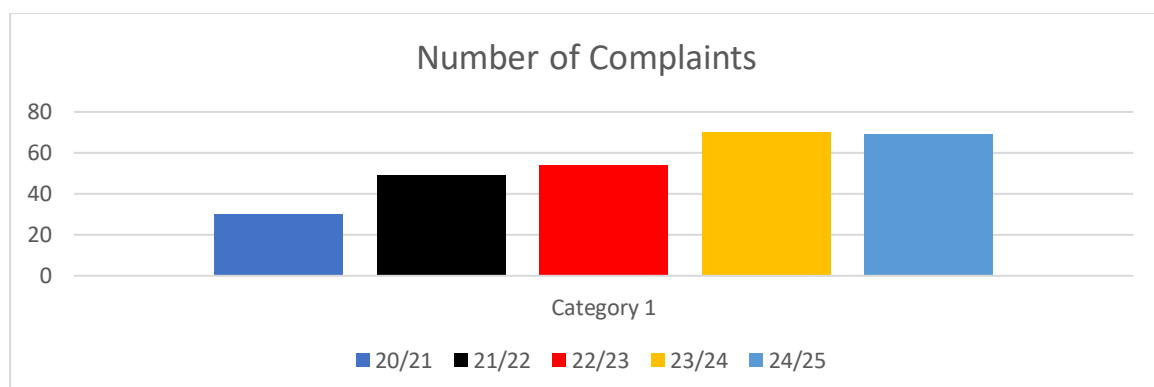
There are no set timeframes which are informed by regulations for the initial stage 1 response to be provided but Barking and Dagenham have set an internal timescale of 20 working days for response.

Complaints Received

It is important to record all complaints which are received within the organisation as this allows the council to learn from the voice of our service users and to ensure that when decisions are being made which can directly impact the service users, we consider their views. To ensure that we keep a full record of all complaints received there is a central complaints team who log and manage all cases with the use of a central database.

In 2024/25 Adult Services as a whole received 69 complaints which were dealt with under the statutory process. This is a decrease on our previous year which was 70.

In the graph which is set out below we can clearly see that Barking and Dagenham prior to this reporting year were receiving a similar number of complaints from our service users and their families. The graph represents a 5-year view of the complaints received.



LGO Cases

Complaints which fall under the umbrella of Social Care are overseen by the Local Government Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) who provide an independent service with whom our complainants can contact should they feel the response or service provided by the Council has fallen below expectations. The LGSCO publish all their findings on their website which can be found at the following link [LGO Decisions](#)

In 2024/25 the LGSCO has published 5 reports on the council, these complaints outcomes are after external investigation can be found in the table below. When we benchmark ourselves against other councils with a similar geodemographic make up, we are in line with other councils. We should note an increase in number of cases from last year by 66%.

Council	Number of Cases	Upheld	Not Upheld	Closed After Initial Enquires
Barking and Dagenham	5	3	0	2
Blackburn and Darwen	2	2	0	0
Bolton	5	3	1	1
Oldham	10	5	1	4

Comparison against Statistical Neighbours

Council	Number of Cases	Upheld	Not Upheld	Closed After Initial Enquires
Barking and Dagenham	5	3	0	2
Redbridge	9	4	0	5
Waltham Forest	12	6	1	5
Bexley	2	1	0	1

Summary of Upheld LGO Complaints

Ms X complained about the outcome of a Disabled Facilities Grant application for adaptations to meet her child's needs. The Council accepts it delayed in deciding the application and based its decision on inaccurate information. The Council has agreed to apologise, carry out a new assessment and make a payment to Ms X.

Ms X complained the Council billed her daughter for care charges for the time she spent in supported living from 2015 to 2022. Ms X says her daughter cannot manage her own finances and it failed to tell Ms X about the care charges. The Council has accepted fault for failing to complete a capacity assessment of Ms X's daughter or keep either Ms X or her daughter suitably informed about care charges. The Council has offered to remove care charges from 2019 to December 2022. This is a suitable

offer to reflect the fault. The Council also agreed to apologise to Ms X for delays in confirming the care charges owed from January 2023 to June 2023 and offer a payment arrangement to repay this balance owed.

Ms X complains the Council delayed arranging transport for her father, Mr Y, to attend a day centre. She says this prevented him from having cultural, social and cognitive stimulation. We find the Council at fault which caused Mr Y and Ms X injustice. The Council has agreed to make a payment and apologise to Mr Y and Ms X and take service improvement action.

Complaint Themes

The capturing of complaint themes is important as it serves as a compass for organisational improvement. By identifying recurring patterns in complaints, we gain valuable insights into the root causes of issues that may otherwise go unnoticed. Below is a table which indicates the cause of complaint and against which service area it has been registered.

Issue	Adult Disability	Integrated Care	Commissioning	Mental Health	Intake	% Upheld
Delay in Communication	0	0	0	2	0	0%
Delay in doing something	2	5	0	1	0	63%
Disagree with Charge Received	2	2	0	3	1	63%
Failure to do something	1	2	0	0	0	33%
Inappropriate Behaviour	1	2	0	2	0	100%
Insufficient Information	1	2	0	0	0	33%
No Communication received	0	0	0	1	2	33%
Not to the quality or standard expected	3	4	0	2	0	44%
Other communication	0	2	0	1	0	33%
Other payments	1	0	0	2	0	67%
Other service failure cause	1	0	0	1	0	50%
Other service quality cause	0	0	1	0	0	0%
Other staff conduct cause	1	0	0	2	0	0%

Staff rudeness	1	3	0	1	1	40%
Unhappy with decision	0	9	0	1	0	27%
Total	14	31	1	19	4	49%

Insights from Complainant Feedback

The following themes have emerged from the concerns raised by individuals using our adult social care services. These reflect the perceptions and experiences shared by complainants and do not represent confirmed findings from formal investigations. They are presented here to help identify areas where service users feel improvements may be needed:

1. **Perceptions of Practitioners Conduct:** Some complainants expressed concerns about the professionalism and approach of social workers. Feedback included feelings of being treated dismissively, experiencing poor communication, and not receiving adequate support. A few individuals described instances where they felt their needs were not addressed promptly or accurately.
2. **Experiences with Care Services:** Several complaints related to the quality of care provided by external agencies. These included reports of care workers being late, inattentive, or not meeting expected standards of support. Some complainants felt that the care provided did not align with their or their loved ones' needs.
3. **Occupational Therapy Assessments:** A number of service users raised concerns about the accuracy and usefulness of occupational therapy assessments. Issues mentioned included assessments that did not reflect the individual's actual needs, delays in receiving equipment, and limited follow-up.
4. **Financial Assessments and Charges:** Some individuals reported confusion or dissatisfaction with financial assessments and billing. Complaints included unexpected charges, lack of clear communication about costs, and delays in resolving payment issues.
5. **Safeguarding and Safety:** A few complaints highlighted concerns about the safety and wellbeing of individuals in care settings. These included reports of inadequate supervision, potential neglect, and environments that were perceived as unsafe.

As a consequence of our complainant's views and our subsequent investigations we have proactively made changes to our approach within Adult Social Care. We have completed this by undertaking the following actions.

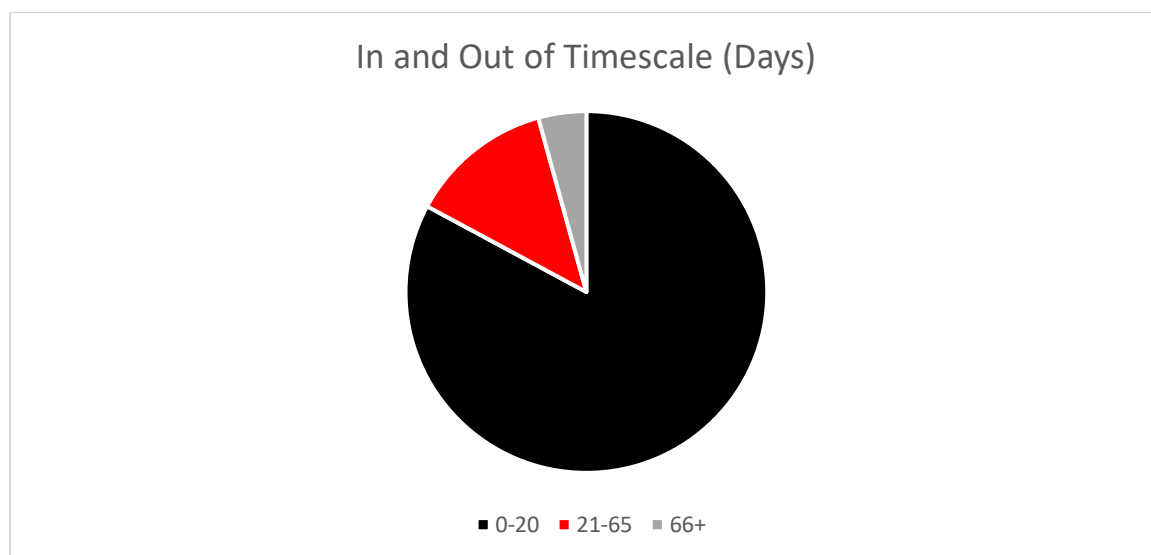
1. Wider learning from specific complaints is shared in team meetings, to ensure expectations on staff practice and conduct are clear.
2. The timeliness of decision-making and services is closely monitored. Work has been carried out to reduce delays in support starting and agree any short-

term support needed in the interim. This has been added to our Practice Framework, which sets out the expectations on how we work.

3. We have reiterated the expectation that practitioners keep people informed of any delays in support starting and agree any short-term support needed in the interim. This has been added to our Practice Framework, which sets out the expectations on how we work.
4. We are improving communication on financial assessments and charging so that people get this at the earliest possible stage in their social care journey. The introduction of an online calculator, Visiting Officers and new leaflets has also helped with this.
5. The themes arising from complaints inform future Practice Improvement workshops. These are a rolling programme of workshops to support and improve staff practice in operational teams.
6. The themes arising from complaints will inform future Provider Forum meetings. These are regular meetings with the care providers we work with to support residents.
7. The timeliness, safety and quality of care provision will continue to be monitored through the work of the Provider Quality and Improvement Team.

Timeliness of Response

Under the regulations there is no set timescale for response to be provided to the complainant. The LGSCO would consider that 12 weeks would be reasonable in terms for the council to investigate and provide a response to the concerns raised. Within Barking and Dagenham, we strive for 20 working days to respond.



83% of our complaints were answered in timescale, which is a decrease of 1% on the previous year's performance, this decrease is minimal and we are working closely with teams to increase our Adult Social Care Complaints performance closer with our set target of 90%. We continue to carefully monitor our performance via quarterly feedback to the Operational Management Team and weekly reports so that officers are aware of any outstanding complaints.

Consideration of the cases which went out of timescale provides several reasons for the delays.

Complex cases in which we were required to liaise with our external partners to gather information to support the investigation.

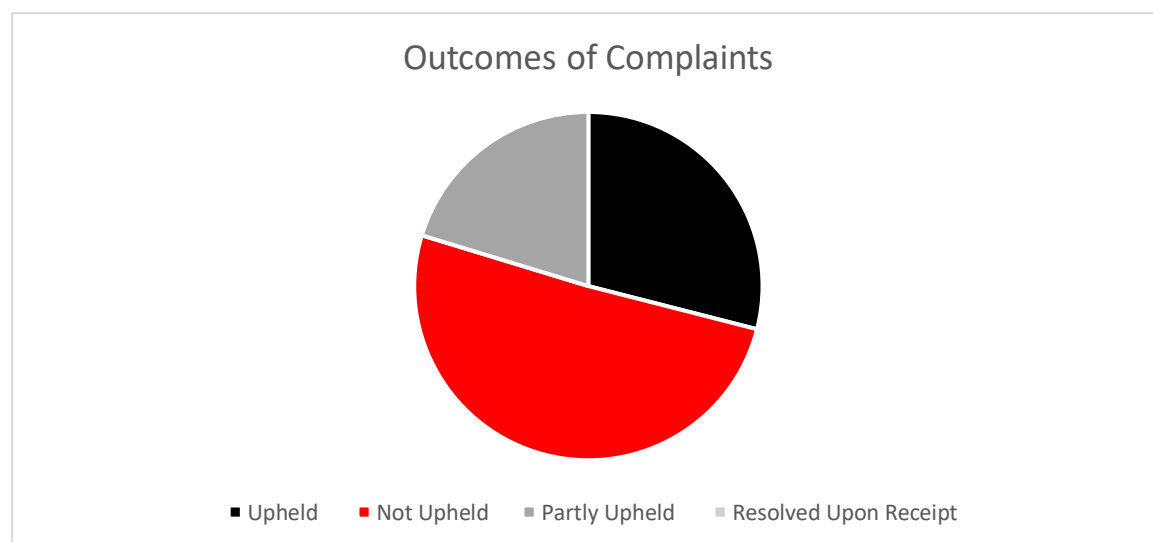
Requiring further information from complainants and their representatives in order to fully understand and investigate the matter.

Multi-Departmental response being required. Working within Adult Social Care it is not always just the actions of Adult Social Care that is under scrutiny but often there will be implications from other service areas such as benefits and housing.

Outcomes of the complaints

Recording the outcomes of complaints, whether upheld or not, is essential for several reasons. When complaints are upheld, it signifies that a genuine issue was identified, and it becomes an opportunity for improvement. By documenting the resolution and correction actions taken, organisation can demonstrate their commitment to addressing concerns, which can rebuild trust with the complainant and showcase transparency to stakeholders.

On the other hand, documenting not upheld complaints is equally crucial. It helps maintain a record of investigations, ensuring fairness and accountability in the complaints process. Further to this, tracking both upheld and not upheld complaints allows organisations to analyse trends, assess the effectiveness of their responses, and make data-driven decisions for continuous improvement.



In this financial year we have either upheld or partly upheld 49% of the complaints which have been submitted. While this may appear to be high it shows that as a council, we are fully able to recognise where we could have improved the manner in which we have dealt with service users.

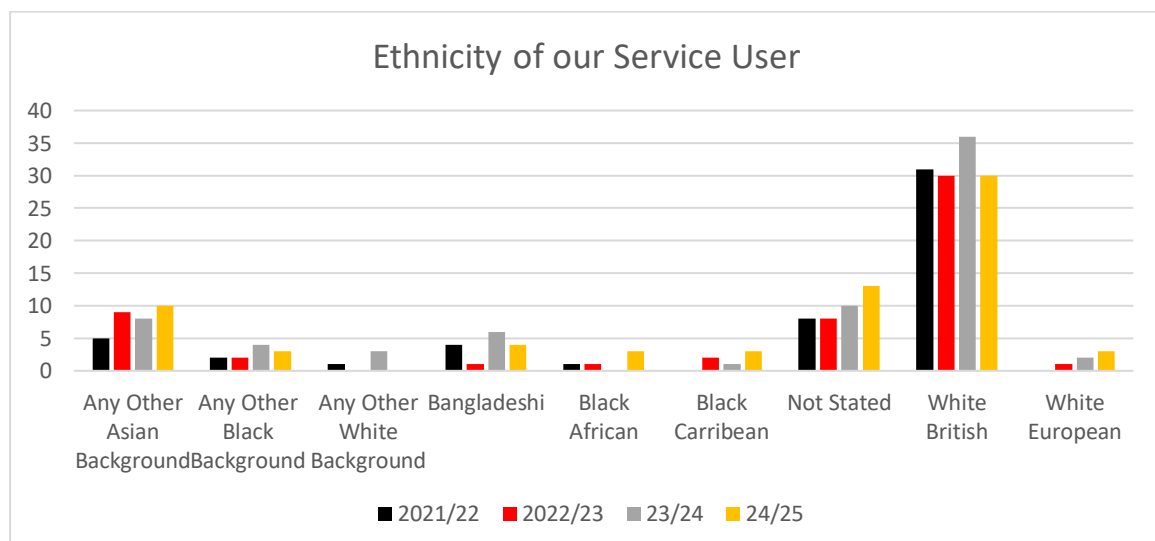
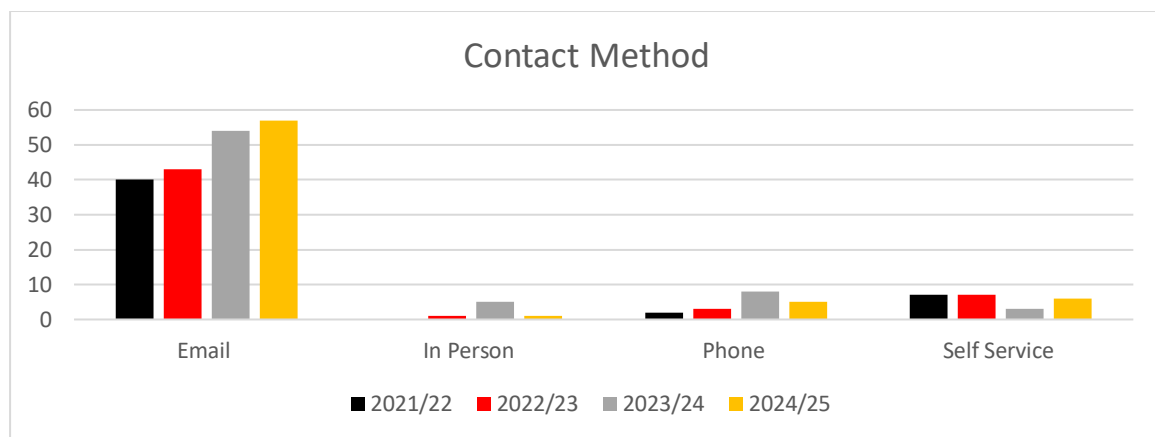
We continue considering upheld complaints to ascertain which service improvements could be made as a consequence.

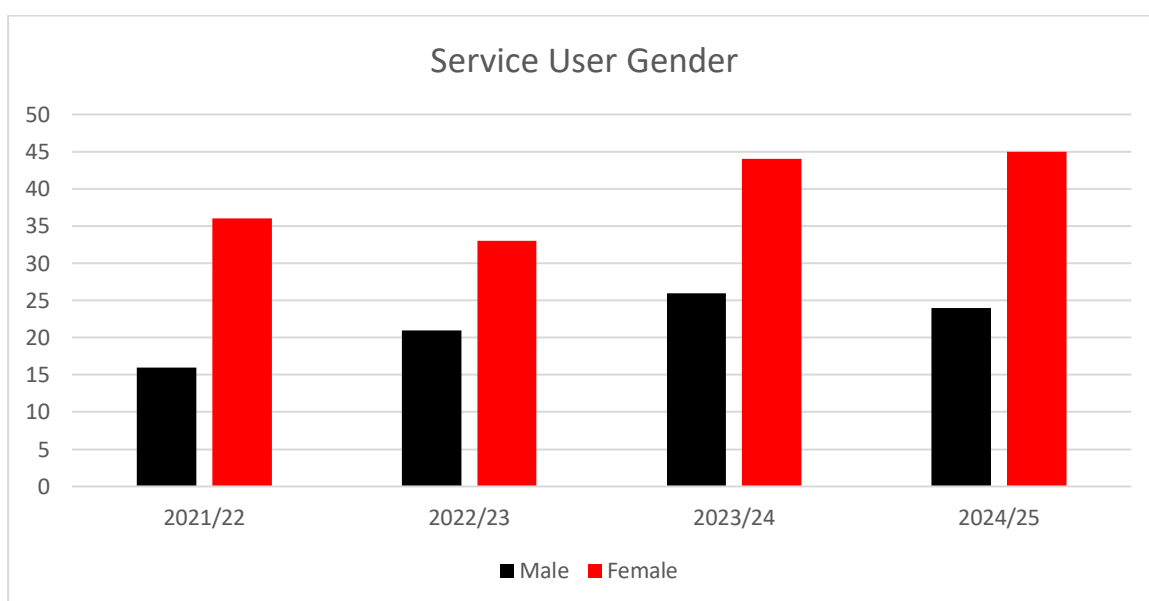
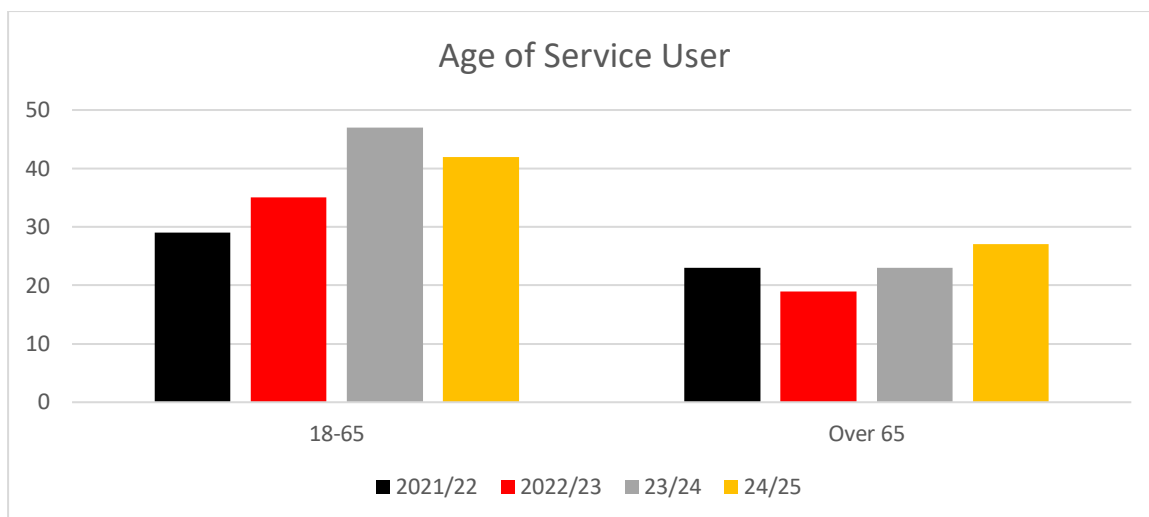
Making Improvements

We maintain close scrutiny of complaint levels, with them being a regular topic on our performance meetings. This ensures open communication with the Director regarding persistent and intricate complaints. Complaints serve as essential performance metrics within the discussions.

We've established specific timelines, and we generate a weekly performance report that is shared with all management. This report aids in the early identification of complaints approaching our locally defined deadlines.

People who use our complaints process





Compliments

As a Local Authority while it is important we recognise complaints we should also celebrate the good news which we receive. All our practitioners work with the best interests of our residents with the work we complete.

Within 24/25 we have received 50 compliments for the work undertaken with our residents and I have placed a sample below.

I wanted to take a moment to formally thank you both for all your efforts in finding a residential care home for my mum in Brentwood. The home is perfectly located close to me and my family and has a lovely, homely feel.

I apologise if I may have come across as forceful at times, but every decision I made was in the best interests of my mother, whom I love dearly. After nearly three years of recurring falls, broken bones, countless bruises, and many sleepless nights, I was at the end of my tether. I appreciate that securing a suitable home for my mum took longer than you had hoped, but I also recognise the challenges and red tape you

may have faced behind the scenes. Please know that your hard work has not gone unnoticed, and I am truly grateful.

S/W provided myself and my father with different options when it comes to his care plan. She ensured that she kept us informed at every stage of the process and included us in all decisions making.

S/W was polite, understanding, professional and very thorough while assessing my fathers needs. Due to the complicated needs of my father and language barrier S/W stayed in constant contact with myself. As a carer I felt really supported and reassured that my father will get the right care for him due to S/W continuous support throughout the assessment.

S/W has been nothing but professional towards me and my sister when completing her new care plan. she has always communicated every step with me and has always replied to me via email or phone with any questions or queries that i might have had.

I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for all that you do for mum. I'm so grateful for the ladies at the council that referred me to you as I don't know what I would have done if I had been put in the position of having to look after mum in her home.

Thank you so much for your email yesterday. I must admit it moved us to tears to hear the lovely things said about her.

Mum loved D's 'singing' and it always made her smile. M and mum were indeed best friends, and it was lovely to see them together and become so close.

Please thank S for organising that, we do appreciate it.

In a week or so if S could contact me, I'll speak to her regarding having a celebration of life with everyone.

Thanks again and we'll see you all soon.